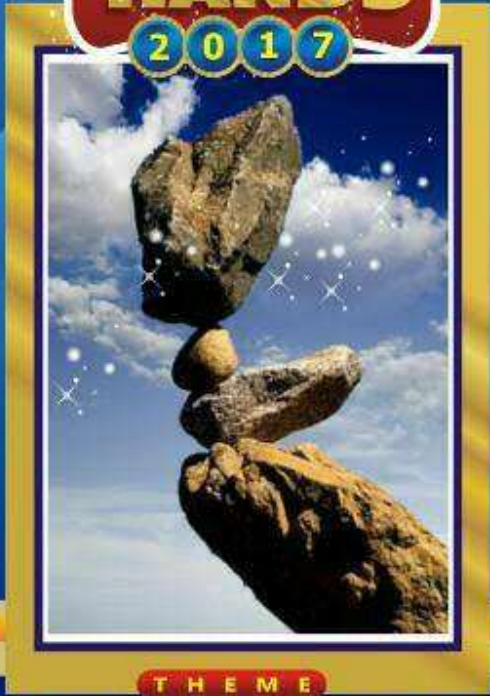




**ROYAL AMBASSADORS OF NIGERIA**  
**MEN'S MISSIONARY UNION**  
 NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION



**GIFTED HANDS**  
**2017**



**T H E M E**

**OPEN HEAVEN:**  
**A SUPERNATURAL**  
**ENCOUNTER**

1 SAMUEL 1:1-10

OR

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WTH

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*Christ*

2 Cor. 5:20

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## INTRODUCTION

We thank God for the grace to witness the celebration of this year's Royal Ambassadors week. RA week is important in the life and ministry of the organization not only because boys and leaders in the organization always look up to it, but also because it is a time of refreshing and revival for members of the organization. Majority of the boys are therefore involved in the planning and execution of the programme at Chapter level.

Our theme for this year is: **OPEN HEAVENS (Ezekiel 1:1)**. To experience open heavens is also to have a divine encounter which must be supernatural or extraordinary in nature. Hannah in I Samuel 1 experienced her open heavens as a result of the supernatural encounter she had with the Lord. My prayer is that there shall be supernatural encounters in our churches this year as we celebrate the Royal Ambassadors week in Jesus name.

Let me remind us that in 2015, we were admonished to "Contend for the Faith" (Jude 1:3). It is however impossible to "Contend for the Faith" without reaching out with the gospel of Christ. In essence, the best way to "Contend for the Faith" is to depopulate the kingdom of the devil as we populate the kingdom of God. We were therefore encouraged in 2016 to "Make Known the Wisdom of God" (Eph 3:10). Preaching the gospel of Christ is the wisdom of God. However, a major spiritual benefit for contending for the Faith and making known the wisdom of God is to enjoy Open Heavens. An Open heaven experience is a supernatural encounter.

I am therefore grateful to our contributors for this year's programme. Pastor (Mrs) Tinuke Akinlawon wrote on the Anti-social-vices while Dn Olusola..... wrote the lecture on entrepreneurship. The Contributions of the RA Marshal Couns. Ayo Adekunle, National Missions Officer Couns. Segun Bolarinde, Chief of Staff to the RA Marshal Couns. Biodun Eegundiran, RAN Editor in Chief Adisa Buxton O, and Amb. Samson Adigun is appreciated. Amb. Tosin Awe did the typesetting.

**Pastor F.A.S Akinola**

National Coordinator

MMU, NBC.

## **DAILY PROGRAMME**

**SUNDAY MORNING:** WORSHIP SERVICE AND PROMOTION DAY

**SUNDAY EVENING:** REVIVAL: A NIGHT OF ENCOUNTER

**MONDAY:** LECTURE: SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER: THE NAAMAN EXPERIENCE

**TUESDAY:** INTERACTIVE FORUM: LEARNING FROM HANNAH'S EXPERIENCE

**WEDNESDAY:** SHILOH EXPERIENCE: PRAY IT THROUGH

**THURSDAY:** ENCOUNTERING GOD IN YOUR CAREER

**FRIDAY:** HARVESTING THROUGH SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER: NEIGHBOURHOOD  
EVANGELISM

**SATURDAY:** POWER OVER SOCIAL VICES.

## **ORDER OF SUNDAY PROGRAMME**

### **MORNING SERVICE**

#### **WE WORSHIP & WELCOME THE SUPERNATURAL GOD THROUGH:**

- Processional Hymn
- Call to Worship
- Hymn of Praise [ BH329 ] Sweet Hour of Prayer
- Prayer of Praise and Invocation
- Praises and Worship

#### **WE INTERACT IN HIS ENCOUNTER THROUGH**

- Welcome and Announcement
- Pastoral Prayers

- R.A Emphasis/ Promotion Exercise
- R.A Week Offering

### **WE ENCOUNTER HIM THROUGH**

- Bible Reading
- Music Ministration
- Message
- Hymn of Commitment.[ BH 40] A Mighty Fortress

### **WE APPRECIATE AND DEPART TO SERVE THE SUPERNATURAL GOD THROUGH**

- Tithes and Offering
- Closing Hymn { BH 319 } Higher Ground.
- Closing Prayer and Benediction

## **SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE AND PROMOTION DAY**

### **SUNDAY MORNING MESSAGE**

#### **TOPIC: ATMOSPHERE OF SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER**

TEXT: I SAMUEL 1:1-19

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The central theme of the ministry of the Men's Missionary Union (RA inclusive) for the year is OPEN HEAVENS and the text is taken from Ezekiel 1:1. To experience open heaven is

- (i) to have hopeless situations turned around.
- (ii) to operate in divine grace and favour.
- (iii) to have hardship, disappointments, sorrow, stagnancy, delay, lack, failure terminated.
- (iv) to enjoy breakthrough from various life problems. etc

To experience all of the above is to have a supernatural encounter. Open heavens, therefore, means experiencing supernatural encounter.

Hannah had been unable to conceive children, and in the Old Testament times, a childless woman was considered a failure. Her barrenness was a social embarrassment and

shame to her and her husband. But she had a supernatural encounter (Open Heavens) at Shiloh that positively changed her life situation. She received hope for hopelessness, growth for stagnation, joy for sorrow, divine appointments for disappointments and provision for lack. My prayer is that you will at this year's Royal Ambassadors week have an encounter that will deal a big blow to all failures, sorrow, shame, lack and embarrassment of your life in Jesus name.

#### **MAIN IDEA:**

To experience supernatural experience, one must be in the right atmosphere and attitude. Atmosphere that creates and promotes supernatural encounter includes :

- (i) atmosphere of true worship.
- (ii) atmosphere of love.
- (iii) right response to provocations/discouragements.
- (iv) atmosphere of support.
- (v) atmosphere of commitment.

#### **1. TRUE WORSHIP: Vs 3,19**

As the head of the family, Elkanah made it a duty to lead his family to encounter God in worship at Shiloh. This is in honour of God's command in Ex 23:14-17, and 40:34. The NIV Bible states "year after year" (v3). That is, it is a tradition that the family has been committed to worship at Shiloh. It was a commitment to worship the true God. It was this worship experience that was the premise for Hannah's encounter. She attended the corporate worship with every other person and thereafter entered into a personal worship experience. At this personal worship experience, she poured out her mind to God in a way she could not do in a corporate worship. To have a supernatural encounter therefore, every child of God must take these two worship experiences seriously. That is, corporate and personal worship experience. Your commitment to true worship is therefore a prerequisite to your supernatural encounter. It is also likely that the corporate worship has influence on her personal worship experience. We can safely conclude that Hannah was a worshipper and that paved way for her supernatural encounter.

In verse 3, we were made to know that Elkanah "Sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh". Three important messages can be deduced from that. First, the object of the family's worship was God the Almighty. Our worship must therefore be directed to Him and Him alone. Second, the fact that they offered sacrifice means that they gave offering to the Lord. Our worship is not complete without giving to the Lord. Third, the word "Lord Almighty" traditionally means "The Lord of hosts". This emphasizes the Sovereignty of God over all powers (armies) in the universe. Our worship must emphasize His Sovereignty.

## **2. LOVE : V5**

Elkanah's love and support for Hannah was a source of encouragement for her to stay faithful until the fullness of her time. His love must have sustained her in the most difficult times of her waiting. The Bible says "But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her... (v5)

Although, Elkanah could have left her as he was permitted under custom to divorce a barren wife, he remained lovingly devoted to her despite social criticism and his rights under civil law. Her husband was therefore a major source of support and love until God's time was brought to fulfillment in her life.

An atmosphere enveloped with love, therefore, promotes supernatural encounter. Hannah may have surrendered to provocations of her rival if the love of Elkanah was not there. Every child of God waiting for spiritual encounter needs people to show them true love and support and the Church of God must not fail in this regard. Unfortunately, many church members are like Peninah. They mock and jeer fellow Christians in their difficult times. They make statements that erode the confidence of such people in the Lord. If your church must be a place of supernatural encounter, it must first be an assembly of love. Same for your private life.

## **3. GODLY RESPONSE TO PROVOCATIONS & DISCOURAGEMENT : 7,9-10,14-15**

Hannah had good reasons to feel provoked and bitter as some of us also have. She had reasons to be annoyed not only with people in her environment but also with God.

- (i) She was unable to bear children not because of her own error but because her womb was closed.
- (ii) She shared her husband with a woman who ridiculed her. Peninah was a constant source of provocation.
- (iii) Her loving husband could not protect her against her wicked rival.
- (iv) The high priest misunderstood her motives and addressed her in a provocative manner.

Instead of responding negatively, Hannah chose to respond in a godly manner. Instead of retaliating or giving up hope, she chose to pray. She brought her problem honestly before God in prayer. Each of us may face times of barrenness when nothing "comes to birth" in our work, service, relationship, health etc. it is difficult to pray in faith when we feel so ineffective. But as Hannah discovered, prayer opens the way to God to work. We must have a positive response to all provocations of life for us to experience divine encounter. We cannot keep others from unjustly criticizing, mocking, and jeering us, but we can choose how to react to their hurtful words. Rather than dwelling on the problems, we can choose to enjoy the loving relationship God has given us. By so doing, we can change self-pity for hope.

Earlier, Hannah had been discouraged to the point of being physically sick and unable to eat. After the supernatural encounter, she returned home well and happy. The change in her attitude may be attributed to three factors.

- i. She honestly prayed to God
- ii. She received encouragement from Eli the prophet. It was a prophetic statement.
- iii. She resolved to leave the problem to God.

This is the antidote for discouragement. Tell God how you really feel and leave your problems with him.

#### **(4) SUPPORT : 3A, 8**

Elkanah did not only showed love to Hannah, he also supported her greatly. This is reflected in the portion of sacrifice meat he gave to her. The Bible says “But to Hannah he gave a double portion”. This was meant to make her happy and know that despite her condition of barrenness, he (the husband) was with her. This is a great comfort and support. It is the joy of every woman to have the support of her husband and that was what Elkanah provided for Hannah. A woman will perform better in any endeavour and despite any obstacle if she is sure of her husband’s support.

Elkanah also demonstrated support for Hannah in kind and comforting words. “Elkanah her husband would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?” What a great comfort and encouragement. Elkanah seems to be saying to Hannah, “I will be with you, I will support you, I will continue to love you even if you don’t have a child”. All these must have kept Hannah hopeful until she had that encounter in prayer with the Lord. Atmosphere of support promotes supernatural encounter. Our churches and church members must therefore provide support for one another so that we can experience supernatural encounter.

#### **(5) COMMITMENT 7B-11**

Hannah demonstrated commitment to God and things of God even before her supernatural encounter. The Scripture made it clear that Hannah was a regular worshipper at the house of the Lord. “...whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord...” She was regular at the temple. She was committed to temple worship. I have the feeling that Hannah was a committed worker in church. She never allowed her situation to affect her commitment to God. If you are believing God for a supernatural encounter, you must be committed to God and the things of God. Hannah’s vow to the Lord is another evidence of her commitment to God. She committed a promise to her request. Hannah voluntarily vows for her son what God had required from Samson (Judges 13.5). This is not a message to justify the need to make vows but an argument in support of Hannah’s commitment to God and the things of God. If you want to have a supernatural encounter, be committed in your relationship with God. It is important to mention that Hannah eventually fulfilled her vow. She was committed to her vow.

## **CONCLUSION**

Each of us may face times of barrenness when nothing “comes to birth” in our work, service, relationship, health, etc. it is difficult to pray in faith when we feel so ineffective. But as Hannah discovered, prayer opens the way for God to work. Prayer is a means to supernatural encounter.

**SUNDAY EVENING.**

**REVIVAL : A NIGHT OF ENCOUNTER.**

## **MONDAY: LECTURE**

### **SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER: NAAMAN’S EXPERIENCE.**

**2 KINGS 5:1-14.**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The crux of the theme this week is how to experience supernatural encounter. The central case is that of Hannah in the book of I Samuel 1. It must however be noted that Hannah was not the only person in the scriptures that experienced the supernatural touch of God. Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army also did.

The supernatural experience of Hannah and Naaman were not the same. This is because our God works in diverse ways. There are however major principles that we must meet to experience God supernaturally. The summary of today’s teaching is an examination of a few principles that worked for Naaman that can also work for us today as we believe God for a supernatural encounter.

**(1) IDENTIFY THE ISSUE(S)/ PROBLEM(S)**



The Bible in verse 1 identified Naaman's problem to be leprosy. His problem was neither his greatness nor being a valiant soldier. The presentation of his issue that needed supernatural encounter was not ambiguous. We can also suggest that Naaman identified the same issue as his problem. The way he reacted to the suggestion of the slave girl is a proof of this. His quest for healing despite his greatness must have influenced his decision to give the slave girl's counsel a positive consideration. It is therefore important for you to identify areas of your life where you need supernatural encounter. Jesus in Luke 18:41 asked the blind man "what do you want me to do for you". Jesus seems to be telling the man to identify the problem of his life that needed supernatural touch. The man was very clear in his answer; "Lord, I want to see". He identified his problem. In your prayer and general relationship with God, you must learn to identify before God areas of your life that you want Him to intervene. You may even create a prayer diary where you keep their records so that you may also know when they have been met.

Naaman's situation seriously needed a divine attention. This is because leprosy was one of the most feared diseases of the time. Some forms were extremely contagious and in many cases, incurable. In its worst forms, leprosy leads to death. Many lepers were forced out of cities into quarantined camps. A leper therefore needed a supernatural encounter to get cured. It was beyond human power. What are those issues of your life that are already beyond human power? Identify them and bring them to the Lord.

## **(2) YOU NEED DESTINY HELPERS.**

Man was not created to be an island. It is the purpose of God that man will relate with his creator and also relate with fellow human beings. It is in this form of relationship that will find help. You cannot achieve supernatural encounter alone. You need other people in various forms and various reasons. God is our help but humans are His vessels in bringing help to man.

Naaman the commander of the Aramian army had four major destiny helpers on his way to his supernatural encounter. They were:

- (i) the slave girl who God used to suggest the idea of visiting Prophet Elisha. (v3)
- (ii) King of Aram who not only encouraged Naaman to yield to the slave girl's advice but also gave him a letter of recommendation to the king of Israel. (v5)
- (iii) Prophet Elisha, who uttered the Prophetic instruction for Naaman's healing (v10).
- (iv) Naaman's servants who advised and encouraged him not to disobey Elisha's prophetic instructions. (v13).

There is the temptation to consider the prophet as the only vessel that God used. That will be far from the truth. Naaman encountered God because all of them played their part. You may consider the probable implication of one of them not playing his/her part. Naaman may miss this celebrated supernatural encounter. For example, the little girl brief word to her mistress

brought healing and faith in God to a powerful Syrian captain. God has placed her for a purpose and she was faithful.

The summary is that you need God to send you destiny helpers even as you are believing Him for your supernatural encounter. It was God in His divine providence that sent the

slave girl and Elisha to Naaman. The army commander's good relationship with people around him brought help from the king and the other servants. You may therefore need to examine your relationship with others.

### **(3) CHARACTER**

I believe in the saying that "your attitude determines your altitude". While good character has lifted many up, bad character has also brought many down even to their graves. Naaman was a man of good character and that facilitated his supernatural encounter. He had good attitude and a glaring one is humility. First, he was humble enough to take the advice of a slave girl. Imagine what would have happened if Naaman had rejected the girl's counsel. His miracle may be suspended. Second, though he initially queried the instruction of the prophets, he eventually yielded to the counsel of his servants to bath in a "dirty" water. Two important issues here is that a great man like Naaman bathed in a "dirty" water and also listened to his servants. Obedience to God begins with humility. We must believe that His ways are better than our own. We may not always understand His ways of working, but by humbly obeying, we will receive His blessing.

### **(4) TOTAL SURRENDER**

The final decision of a great and influential man like Naaman to submit to God's command to bath in Jericho water is equal to total surrender. Washing himself in River Jordan did not make initial logic to him. He left in a rage because the prescribed cure for his disease seemed for simple. He was a hero and he expected a heroic cure. He could not accept the simple cure of faith.

We must know that logic is good but God cannot always be subjected to human logic. His ways can be different from others. No matter how good your plans, and visibility studies are to you, they must not negate God's plan for your life. If it does, supernatural encounter will be impossible. Always submit to God's plan whenever your plans contradict that of God.

To submit to God is obedience to His will. You cannot claim to totally surrender to God when you cannot obey Him. Naaman first obeyed before his supernatural encounter was brought to fulfillment. The instruction from the prophet is designed for his fulfillment. The instruction from the prophet is designed to demonstrate to Naaman that healing would come by the power of God of Israel but only if he obeyed the word of the Lord through the prophet. So, Naaman obedience has a direct relationship with his supernatural encounter. As he obeyed

God's word, Naaman received the gift of God's grace. God's blessing is found in trustful obedience.

#### **(5) GODLY ADVICE**

Naaman was blessed with good advisers and also was positively disposed to good counsels. It was the slave girl from the land of Israel that gave the first advice leading to his supernatural encounter. Naaman never discard the counsel of an ordinary slave girl. Credit must also be given to Naaman's wife who transmitted the counsel from the girl to her husband. The king of Aram was the second counsellor. He backed the counsel of the slave girl by impressing it on Naaman to yield to the girl's account. Again, Naaman did not reject the advice of the king. The king also did not treat the counsel of a slave girl as worthless.

Lastly, it was Naaman's servants that advised him not to rebel against the prophet's instruction. They appealed to their boss to obey the voice of the Lord. Naaman obeyed and returned to follow the instruction of the prophet.

To have your desired supernatural encounter, two things must be done. First, you need godly advisers. Advisers that will be truthful to you and not just tell you what you want to hear. Those that will give you painful but profitable counsels. Prayerfully choose your advisers. Second, you must create/develop attitudes that take godly counsel. Those counsels are most times painful and pinch our self-pride. However, we must be humble enough to accept them. These are the types of counsels that will lead you to your supernatural encounter.

#### **CONCLUSION**

To experience supernatural encounter in your areas of needs, learn from Naamaan.

### **TUESDAY:INTERACTIVE FORUM: LEARNING FROM HANNAH'S EXPERIENCE**

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

The purpose of this programme is to bring out salient issues from Hannah's Supernatural Encounter, issues that will help us to know how to position ourselves for supernatural encounter. From Sunday sermon, it was discovered that Hannah was well positioned to

encounter God. It is therefore necessary for us to be well positioned even even as we trust God for divine encounter.

We have here provided a guide for those that will lead our thought in this interactive forum. Leaders of this session should know that their responsibility is to facilitate discussion and not to teach. It is neither a Bible study nor a lecture. Since some of the issues have direct link with Sunday sermon, it is advisable for leaders to familiarize themselves with the Sunday morning message, Below are the provided guiding questions :

1. Do an evaluation of your church worship experience. How can your church worship experience bring about supernatural encounter? How can your church be a contemporary Shiloh so that every worship will be a Shiloh experience ?
2. How can we deal with provocations / discouragements / reproach generally and especially as a church ? [ vs 7, 13-14 ]
3. Discuss the place or position or limitations of the priest / pastor in bringing about supernatural encounter [ vs 12-14 ] ?
4. How would you evaluate your church love life ? How can your church improve on its love sharing life ?

5. What and where is the place of vow or covenant in our relationship with God and in our experience of supernatural encounter [ vs 11] ? Is it necessary to make a vow before encountering God? What about people who make same vow in multiple places of worship?
6. How can the church be a source of support to those who are passing through difficult times?

WEDNESDAY: SHILOH EXPERIENCE: PRAY IT THROUGH

THURSDAY: ENCOUNTERING GOD IN YOUR CAREER.

**HOW CAN WE ENCOUNTER GOD IN OUR CAREERS**  
**ENCOUNTERING GOD IN YOUR CAREER**

**Introduction:** Recognizing that some men and women in the Bible used their profession and career not only to fulfil the purpose of God in their lives but also impact their generations positively for God made it embarrassing that in our own generation we accept as normal a segmented Christian life that is powerless and ineffective. We speak of our “spiritual life” and another “secular work” as if we are two different people in the same person. The Bible made us to see that we have just a life that is expected to manifest the glory of God everywhere including our career and profession.

This write up will try to encourage us how we can practically encounter God in our career and shine forth for Him in our profession.

- 1. Have a Stand with God:** If you don't have a stand in the presence of God you cannot stand for Him in the presence of men. *Dan. 6:10 – 11; 10:10 – 14; 1Kings 17:1*. Every attempt to stand for God in the open without first taking a proper and firm stand before God especially in the secret will fail woefully. The Christian professional who will project God and His glory must have a personal, intimate and genuine rebirth and relationship with Christ. A life of inner chambering in the place of prayer is very crucial and important. He must have a current warm fellowship and relationship with God. Daniel was called a man beloved of God in *Dan. 10*. He had a prayer life that is constant, fervent and able to sustain him through the time of peace and war. When Daniel learnt of the signing of the deadly decree by the King at the behest of his enemies, Daniel did not change his prayer life but maintained it. Can your normal prayer life take you through the times of peace and war without a recourse to emergency night vigils, prayer and fasting; at every little appearance of the enemy with his usual roaring?
- 2. Your Profession is a "Calling" Ex. 31:1:** The Bible clearly states "see, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri". Every Christian professional should see his career or profession as a "calling". The same way the pastor or teacher is called to preach or teach, is the same way Christian professionals should see and handle their professions and career.
- 3. Your Profession is your "Pulpit":** Every Christian professional or career person must see his professional platform as his own pulpit. The same way the preacher will use his pulpit in the church, the Christian professional should use his career as a pulpit to preach, teach and show Christ to men.
- 4. Possess an Excellent Spirit:** *Dan. 6:1 – 3* the Bible spoke of Daniel getting promoted above his peers because of the excellent spirit in his life (verse 3). Mediocrity will disallow us from being able to project Christ in our profession or career. We must strive to be among the best that men will seek after our counsel about issues and will be

reluctant to make a final decision in any matter until we have been heard or we have made the necessary input. Pharaoh said about Joseph in *Gen. 41:37 – 39*. “So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the spirit of God”.

In *Daniel 5:8 – 15* when all the astrologers in Babylon could not interpret the handwriting on the wall (verse 8) the king's mother counselled her son to seek out Daniel and his divine wisdom verse 10-12. Daniel was relevant across the tenure of three kings because of the excellent spirit found in him. Christians who are stars in the firmament of their profession career will definitely show forth the glory and beauty of our God.

**5. Diligence, Dan. 6:4 – 5:** The men accusing Daniel could not fault any of his duties. He was a man given to carrying out every assignment to the minutest details. In *Prov. 22:29* the Bible clearly states that a diligent man will stand before Kings not ordinary men. Christians who are fond of using Bible passages to explain or cover up their slothfulness, laziness or carelessness are bringing shame on the name of God.

**6. Be Visionary:** Christian professionals who are able to make a remarkable difference must possess uncommon vision. Ability to see a way where others cannot see any possibility will show forth the glory of God. Nehemiah was the King's cup bearer *Neh. 1:1 – 11* a highly placed position for a slave, but was highly burdened for the welfare of God's people back at home *Neh. 1:1 – 3*, His inquisition revealed the sorry state of the remnant who escaped the captivity in Babylon. The concern he had for the welfare of his people brought up a vision to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem, a place that has been left desolate for decades (*Neh. 2*). He received the King's favor and was able to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in just 52 days after several decades of neglect and reproach. God became glorified.

**Presence of Holy Spirit:** *Exodus 31:1 – 10, Dan. 5:10 – 11, Gen. 41:38*. In the life of Bezaleel, Daniel and Joseph a recurring phrase is “in whom is the spirit of God”. The presence of the Holy Spirit is not only meant for so called “spiritual issues” but ALL areas of our lives as Christians including our profession and career. All the people

mentioned above were career men none is a priest or prophet, yet they shone in the firmament of their times and impacted their generation positively because they had the Holy Spirit in them. It is a gross misrepresentation when the Holy Spirit's influence is restricted to church activities and programmes. A careful reading of *Exo. 31:3* revealed something of great importance "I have filled him (Bezleel) with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in uncler standing in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship, to DESIGN ARITSTIC WORKS, TO WORK IN GOLD, IN SILVER, CARVING WOOD AND TO WORK IN ALL MANNER OF WORKMANSHIP". Can you see the great revelation from this passage. God deliberately filling men with His Spirit not to speak in tongues, raise the dead, heal or deliver the captive, but to empower them to be men of exceptional skills in their chosen profession and career. These are men who were never on the mountain when Moses was receiving detailed instructions on the mountain in *Exod. 25-32* about all he must construct for the tabernacle and other worship centres, yet they were able to produce exactly what God told Moses by mere listening to Moses. The testimony at the end of their labour and construction is found in *Exodus 39:32, 42 – 43*. They were able to capture the design by the power of the Holy Spirit and constructed them exactly the way God commanded them. David another great man of God had a similar experience. "Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chamber, its inner chambers and the place of the mercy seat and the PLANS FOR ALL THAT HE HAD BY THE SPIRIT of the courts of the house ..... *1 Chronicles 28:11 – 12*. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your career or profession or you have confined Him to your so called spiritual life alone? It is time to maximize the blessings, benefit and power of the third person in the Trinity for the benefit of your career and profession.

**7. Provide Practical Solutions:** Over the ages, men who were able to locate the needs of their society or generation and proffer solution have been able to leave indelible marks in the sands of time irrespective of their faith or belief system. The Christian professional or career person will represent God and show case Him to our own generation if we can provide practical solutions to the myriads of problems confronting our own nation and generation. Joseph provided practical economic solution to a present season of surplus harvest as



well as the upcoming season of famine. He protected and empowered Egypt economically and politically and save the then world around the middle East from extinction especially the nation of Israel. His propositions were clear, precise, practicable and workable. Our own nation and generation need men with insight and foresight to take us out of the present economic problem. Can you be the man and make our God known?

**8. *Live the Crucified Life: Gal. 2:20 – 21, 5:24 – 26***

- a. “I am crucified with Christ .....” the first step to living the crucified life is to have this revelational knowledge that everyone who is genuinely born again has been crucified with Christ on the cross. The old nature (spirit of the world) has been terminated through death in the cross, technically you act as a dead man, one who is dead to the world, its affections, desires and ordinary pursuits.
- b. “Nevertheless I live, yet not “I” the “I” in you must give way to the new life who is Christ. Men and women who see you living will think it is the same person they have known, grown up or related with in the past, not knowing that it is not you but another person.
- c. “But Christ lives in me” (my tabernacle) *Col. 3:4; 1Cor. 3:16; 6:19 – 20*. Christ is the new life inside your old body. The old self has been crucified and its place taken up by Christ Himself (*Col. 3:4*). The controlling spirit inside your life must be Christ not your old nature; your body becomes the temple, tabernacle and abode for God to dwell in. You will live with the constant consciousness of God’s permanent presence in your life and your responsibility to live acceptably all the time.
- d. Christ in you the hope of glory *Col. 1:27* the primary means of shining forth the glory and (*Gen. 39:1 – 10*) beauty of God in your career and profession is not to only allow Christ to dwell in you but to allow Him to do all He wants to do through you, your primary responsibility is to carry Him to every place you go and everywhere He will direct you to go so that He (Christ) can show Himself to the world using your body as a means of transporting Him everywhere.
- e. Live only for Christ *2Cor. 5:15, Rom. 14:7 – 9; Rom. 12:1 – 2*. As a Christian you have no personal reason or agenda any more to live here on earth, except for Jesus to live in you. Every personal

ambition, pursuit outside the divine purpose becomes unacceptable to you. You cannot see any other reason to live than to please Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. Paul said “If we behave like madmen” in serving Christ, it is because of the understanding we gained from the word of God that Christ died on our behalf and gave us the “new life” which now controls us. We are left with no other choice than to use the same “new life” to serve Christ who obtained it for us in the first place. Any other usage of our life is like robbing Christ of His rightful possession.

- f. Christ must be magnified in us at any cost *Philip 1:20 – 21* (GNB). Ensuring that Christ is magnified in all that we do including our career and profession becomes a primary DUTY. We will be men who will always ask what is life all about”, “what is the actual worth of living” our career, money, even ministry is not equal to “Christ” or His sacrifice for us.
- g. Exchange (Lay down) ALL for Christ *Philippians 3:7 – 8* Paul was willing to exchange ALL in order to gain Christ and cause Him to be glorified in his life. Lay down your career, ambition, gifts, talents for Christ to ride on into His glory *Matt. 21:1 – 11*. The donkey that made itself available for Christ to ride on also shared in the glory, honour and praise that was showered upon Jesus Christ. Our career properly released to the Master to ride upon will become an instrument to bring glory, honour and majesty to Christ.

**FRIDAY: HARVESTING THROUGH SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER: NEIGHBOURHOOD  
EVANGELISM**

**SATURDAY**

**POWER OVER SOCIAL VICES**

We all have habits, both good and bad. Anything you do automatically without consciously thinking about it or without specifically deciding to do it is a habit. Good habit/practices- such as tidiness, good manners, courtesy, integrity, hard work etc are a real blessing. But when the habits you have picked up are bad, immoral or destructive, and you find them hard or almost impossible to change, they are known as vices.

Vice is from the Latin word 'vitium' which means defect or failing. It is defined as a bad habit or immoral activity. Vices can be classified into different categories but the concern in this write up is on social vices. Social Vices are common among young people; examples include: prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cyber-crimes, cultism, pocket picking, drug addiction, examination malpractices, hooliganism, thuggery/gangstanism, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities, rape etc. there are many bad habits/vices but these are just a few examples of some of the common ones. But know that any bad or negative habit you have that hurts yourself or others is a vice and it is very possible that the enemy of your soul is behind it, using it to try to defeat or hinder you. It is interesting to also note that a vice is a workman's tool that grips something, so it cannot move. Social vices are bad traits, unhealthy and negative behaviours that are against the morality of a society and frowned at by members of the society.

What most people do not realize is that social vice often generates from bad habits and is often more than just ingrained natural reaction. When you have a certain weakness and you entertain and give in to it for a prolonged period of time, you will get addicted to them and it endangers your life and your relationship with others.

### **Major Causes of Youths Involvement in social vices**

- **Peer Pressure:** Due to more time spent with friends than home, the weak nature and the tender age, a young person can easily be influenced if care is not taken. As a young person, there is a high level of curiosity to learn, to have fun and practice new things thus the temptation to smoke, drink, have sexual intercourse etc. The proverb that says 'show me your friends and I will tell you who you are' shows the significance of friends and how they influence lives! As a young guy, there is the tendency to want to behave like your friends so as not to be labeled as cowards, JJC, uncivilized or crude. Therefore, you need to be very careful of who you associate with so as not to mortgage your future. For

instance, if you move with peers with poor academic performances, you will be like them in no time and may be lured to the short cuts to success as examination malpractices.

- **Negligence by parents/ broken homes is another cause.** Lack of parental care, supervision and attention can make a youth engage in social vices. Children from the permissive and uninvolved parenting styles fall mostly into these traps.
- **The negative use of information communication technologies (ICTs)** is an important factor responsible for increase in social vices in modern societies as well. Individuals have to contend with these vices because they violate social norms and values. In other words, they could be regarded as a ‘thorn in the flesh’ of human peace and tranquility. Though information communication technology has its advantages but most youths are not making good use of the positive aspects.
- **Social and environmental factors can also be a major cause.**

### **The Effects of Social Vices**

Social Vices affects the society as a whole, the family and the individual in particular. The mental, physical, academic and moral aspects of the individual are negatively affected.

- As a student, there is every tendency to divert time to these vices instead of being serious with academic work and wastage of time will lead to poor academic performance.
- Deadly diseases that can lead to the termination of lives and career can be contracted. For instance immoral people, rapists and their victims are exposed to sexual diseases like HIV, AIDS and other related diseases.
- Illicit drugs, smoking and alcoholism deteriorate the health of the users. They can also lead to the boldness of going for higher crimes which may lead to incarceration. Many lives are lost to cancer and mental disorder on daily basis. Many young people especially the addicted ones squander their pocket money on drugs and result to theft/ cyber-crimes when they run out of money.
- It tarnishes the image of the family or destabilizes a home. It rumples the peace of a household. How? Parents blame each other for their wayward child(ren) which could lead to separation, broken homes and divorce. The health of parents with children of wayward attitudes are threatened which can further lead to anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, stroke and even,

death! Meanwhile the absence of a parent or both in a young person's life will further complicate matters. In addition, such wayward people constitute a nuisance/menace to the community in which they belong. Most times people do not want to associate with them or their families.

- The image of a country is reduced by the high number of vices. Other countries look down on such country as being weak, corrupt and deadly. They sometimes disallow immigrants into their countries and even if they are allowed, strict screening exercises are put in place. Investors, both foreigners and local, will be scared to invest in a corrupt country. Thus, it will lead to fewer industries and companies that should have provided employment to the citizens. These will further lead to high unemployment rate and inhibition of national growth and development.

**POWER OVER VICES (Romans 10; 9, 1 John 1; 9, 10, Jeremiah 18; 8, Hosea 6; 1, 2 Chronicles 7; 14)**

Having considered the effects of social vices on an individual, the family unit, the society and the country as a whole, what is the way out? How can you as a young man have power over social vices in this corrupt generation? Peradventure, you are already a victim, how can you get a release? We are talking about power over social vices.

There is a true story about a man who owns an eagle, and for many years had chained the eagle to a stake. Over the years, the eagle had walked around and around that stake so much on the end of its chain; that it had worn out and actually rut to the ground. Finally, it was getting old and the master felt sorry for the eagle and thought, 'these are its last days, so I am going to set it free'. So he took the metal ring off the eagle's foot, took it up in his hands and toss it into the air. But what do you think happened? The old eagle had almost forgotten how to fly, it flip-flopped right back down to the ground, walked back over to the old rut and started walking around the rut like he had done for years! No chain or bird band held it... just like a habit. It has been said that 'the chains of bad habits are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken!' - EXCEPT by the LORD!

Social powers cannot be overcome by just human strength except God's help. If you are a victim of social vices, you need a release. The vices are yokes and like every other, yokes must be broken.

- If you are to be free from the vices, essentially, you must avoid them like one would do a plague.
- Whoever has stepped into them should go back to the Lord in confession. Repent and call on the Lord for restoration. Because, involvement in these vices is tantamount to loss of eternal life, there is the need to fight manfully. The Bible says, ‘...the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it’( Matthew 11:12b)
- Confession and Repentance is to be followed by a return to the Lord (Luke 13; 3, Isaiah 55; 7). To return implies one has felt some brokenness and contrition, and such, the Lord is very much keen to save and deliver (Psalm 34:18). Note that when you have Jesus , you also have His power, so even the evil spirits and demons are subject unto you (Matthew 10:1 ,Luke 10:17-19, Acts 8:7)
- Sometimes after confessing to the Lord, you may need to confess to others that you need help and prayer to overcome your weaknesses (James 5:14-16)
- Submit to God and keep His word in your heart daily (Psalm 119;9,11)
- Determination! Be determined that come what may, you will not ‘bow down to the graven image’ of any form of social vice. Learn to say No to evil pressure. Stand out! Whatever the circumstances and even if you are the last man standing, stand for the Lord. Don’t compromise! Remain unshakeable in your faith, in your beliefs. Acculturation is good, but things that add value to your faith or existing culture only should be copied while bad habits should be left in the lurch.
- Choose your friends. Stay away from ungodly fellows (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- Control your thought life (Ephesians 4:23) don’t give satan a foothold. Change requires new thinking. The battle for sin starts in your mind, not in your behavior. The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. You are not what you think you are. Rather, what you think, you are! The battle to deal with those defects in your life that you don’t like starts in your mind. If you want to change anything in your behaviour or anything in your emotion, start with your thought and your attitude.

In conclusion, one of the best protection or power over social vices is to keep busy for God and others; doing what you know you should as well as filling your mind and heart with positive, encouraging, strengthening and faith building thoughts from God’s word,

remembering, memorizing and continually quoting to yourself and even to the enemy when he attacks you. And *'pray without ceasing'* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). As the poem says; 'the devil flees when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees!'

*'You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world' (1John 4:4).*

The power of the Lord is far greater, and is able to break all chains that may bind you.

Whatever your bad habit is, JESUS can set you free!

Shalom!